WOMEN WHO HAVE MADE GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS
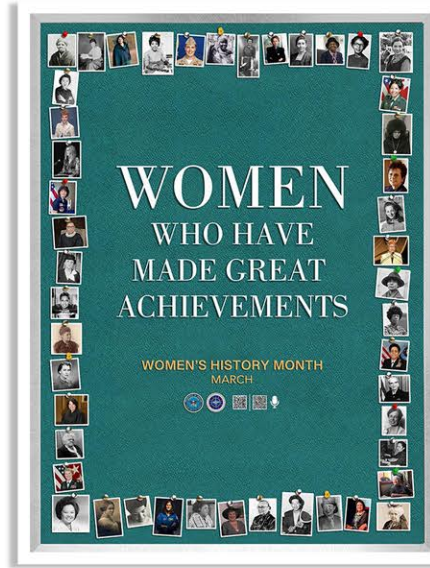
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH
MARCH

Each year, the Department of Defense honors the women who have shaped U.S. history and made contributions to pave the way forward.

Women's History Month has taken place each March since 1987 when Congress passed Public Law 100-9, which authorizes the President to proclaim the observation every year. Before this, the event began as "Women's History Week" in 1981.

This year's theme, *"Women Who Have Made Great Achievements,"* celebrates the women who left an impact on the United States through their sacrifices, public service, and inspirational work.

One of those women was Claudette Colvin. Nine months before Rosa Parks made her famous stand for civil rights, there was Claudette Colvin, a 15-year-old Black girl who challenged segregationist bus policies.

In 1955, Colvin refused to give up her seat for a White woman after the *"Whites only"* section was full. When asked why she would not give her seat up for the woman, she replied, *"because it is my constitutional right."*

The bus driver alerted the police, who forced her off and jailed her. She was the first person arrested for challenging Montgomery's bus segregation laws. After being mistreated by the officers, she was charged with disobeying segregation laws, resisting arrest, and assaulting an officer, which stayed on her record into adulthood.

In 2021, Colvin, then 82 years old, finally had her record expunged of the criminal charges.

Women have played a crucial role in moving progress forward throughout American history.

The innumerable accomplishments of women have shattered obstacles, warranting commemoration during Women's History Month and year-round recognition.

"I just couldn't move. History had me glued to the seat."
- Claudette Colvin

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